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magazine



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# From the editorial group

As we look forward to another new year I hope you will find something to interest you in this first edition of 2014. A distraction on these grey wet winter days might be getting out and about on the new FISH bus? The plans for the new FISH office and the developments for the future, make interesting reading.

Zack Hawkes has taken over from Anouska as our Junior editor and with different ideas to encourage younger readers. The Noticeboard has a number of activities listed which might appeal to those who may not already know about the many clubs in the Library. The Neighbourhood Development Plan articles provide an update on the 'Progress So Far'. The plan is moving towards its final stage and it is important everyone knows what is planned

The Community news is full of the achievements and happenings for people in Sonning Common, yet again a reminder of all that happens in this village and the community spirit which is still maintained. If you have something to say and would like to contribute to the magazine, the next deadline date is 1 March.

From the editorial team we wish you a very Happy and Healthy 2014.

*Diana*

**DIANA PEARMAN** Editor

Email: [editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

PS...

A resident has noticed that John Lewis was missed off the list of editors in 1988 – my apologies.

Sonning Common Magazine is on sale at the village library in Grove Road for £1.50 a copy. Annual subscriptions are available for £15. Contact Geoffrey Adams. Email: [chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org) Phone: 0118 972 2134

Magazine contributions may be posted to:  
1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD

WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS MAGAZINE, THE EDITOR AND THE PUBLISHER CANNOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF ERRORS THAT OCCUR.

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### CHAIRMAN – Geoffrey Adams

1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9TD  
email: [chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org)  
tel: 0118 972 2134

### DIARY DATES – Helen Barker

1 Walnut Close, Sonning Common, RG4 9DG  
email: [helen.barker@tesco.net](mailto:helen.barker@tesco.net)  
tel: 0118 972 1241

### ADVERTISING – John Pearman

50 Kennylands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9JT  
email: [advertising@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:advertising@sonningcommonmagazine.org)  
tel: 0118 972 2381 / 07794 291776

### DISTRIBUTION MANAGER – Helen Gavin

25 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9TD  
email: [distribution@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:distribution@sonningcommonmagazine.org)  
tel: 0118 972 4680

### CONSULTANT EDITOR – Ros Varnes

**JUNIOR EDITOR – Zack Hawkes**  
email:  
[junior\\_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:junior_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

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COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE 01 MARCH 2014





## Chiltern Edge Christmas Production...

Chiltern Edge School presented their fifth Christmas musical production on three sold out evenings in December.

This year the musical Bugsy Malone was chosen and The Performing Arts staff of Mrs Tottman, Miss Griffiths and Mr Harte steered the cast to a magnificently performed evening of music, drama and dancing, with a backstage team of many, helping with sets, costumes, lighting and sound. The front rows of the audience were treated to a "shooting" of shaving foam each evening and the cast seemed to enjoy the production immensely.

The lead roles of Buggy (Conner Limbrick), Blousey (head girl Emily Beech), Tallulah (Izzy Boxall), Dandy Dan (John Corby) and Fat Sam (Max Dorato) were played brilliantly, helped enormously by the rest of the cast with humour and bravado. The Chiltern Edge School Association ran the licensed bar during each evening with proceeds towards school projects, and a cake raffle was held for one of the house charities.

Can't wait for next year - what will it be next time... ■

## A big vote of thanks to our wonderful singers

Also, our sincere thanks go to all who filled the village hall to capacity on Saturday 7 December for "Community Carols".

Tickets and refreshments were free to visitors and the event was entirely funded by Nottakwire. The audience entered so whole-heartedly into what was a very joyful and energising evening of traditional carol singing, interspersed with individual items performed by Nottakwire and The Notts Group. Amongst music performed were Rutter's "Star Carol", "For the Beauty of the Earth" and "The Lord Bless you and Keep You". A number of less well-known musical items were also well received by an enthusiastic audience.

Festive refreshments, including mulled wine were enjoyed at the end of proceedings and patrons donated generously to our chosen charity - "Embrace the Middle East". As a response to the severe troubles of that whole area we decided to depart from our usual local giving and support this particular charity that works to serve the needs of those in the region who have been displaced, are in poverty, orphaned and are homeless and/or hungry regardless of religious belief or culture. We were fortunate to have Rev. Francis Jakeman to speak about the charity and delighted to have a final total of £500 to donate to this very needy cause.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those kind friends who, once again, stewarded and served refreshments and helped with setting out and clearing up. It is a privilege to know and work with our wonderful singers. We look forward to more fun and work next term.

Our next fund-raising event will be on 28 June 2014. Please look out for future details. ■



## Thank you from Santa

With the kind help of local volunteer groups who turned out as Santa's elves assisting collections Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club raised £2,748.72.

Each volunteer group of helpers will receive a percentage of the amounts they collected towards their chosen charity project. In Sonning Common the Lions were helped by members of the Shirehall Rugby Club.

Sonning Common - £736.00 raised  
[www.lions-gwd.org.uk](http://www.lions-gwd.org.uk) ■



John and Carole Lambourne would like to thank all the people who kindly donated to the Christmas Lights at 10a Kennyslands Road in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. **You raised £660.** We hope to do the same next year!

## Old and young in the village support each other...

Members of Nottakwire were delighted at the end of their singing session on 22 November to find a large selection of beautifully decorated cup-cakes awaiting them at refreshment time.

The young members of Club SC had decided to show their gratitude in a practical and most appropriate way, for money received from Nottakwire's fund-raising on three occasions. With the most recent gift of £200 presented to the Club on 12 July 2013, Club SC

purchased - among a number of other items - a cup-cake maker. The members, aided by their leaders, decided to use this to bake sufficient cup-cakes for Nottakwire members to enjoy, as a "Thank You" from them to us! We thought this was a lovely idea and thoroughly enjoyed their efforts!

We are particularly pleased that, with our continuing monetary support for the members of the Club, we have been able to establish positive links across the generations in the village. Long may this continue! ■



## Scouting – full of opportunities

I have been a Scout since 2007 when I joined the 1st Sonning Common Cub Scout pack. Scouts is the perfect opportunity to learn and do all sorts of things that you usually wouldn't get a chance to do at home or at school. As I got older I joined the 89th Reading Scout troop in Caversham, as there was no Scout troop in Sonning Common at the time. Last summer I was invested as an Explorer Scout at the age of 14 years.



## THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

In November I attended a selection camp for the World Scout Jamboree to be held in Japan in 2015. Along with 170 other applicants from Berkshire we were asked to complete team building activities, pioneering challenges and Japanese cultural activities such as calligraphy and origami. I was one of the lucky 45 who was chosen!

In July 2015 I will travel with 3500 Scouts from the UK to Japan and join 30,000 Scouts from around the world for a 10 night camp. We will take part in the peace program including a trip to Hiroshima to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the nuclear bombings in Japan. There will be activities to raise awareness of global issues including the environment, poverty, nature, health, natural disasters and human rights. Whilst there we will take part in charity events, water sports and cultural events.

The UK contingent will also have the opportunity to visit Tokyo as well as staying with a Japanese family for 5 days. I will be going with 5 other people from my district and together we will be fundraising to cover the costs of this amazing trip. We have a number of events being planned to raise money for our fees so please support us if you can. Part of the fee paid by UK Scouts goes towards funding the cost for Scouts from less fortunate countries allowing them to attend. ■

**LAURENCE MARTIN** aged 14 years

## Chiltern Edge GCSE presentation evening

Chiltern Edge School held a presentation evening in October to celebrate the great successes in the GCSE's in 2013. Prizes and special cups were awarded to pupils.

Headteacher Daniel Sadler said "We were very lucky to have two special guests from the world of rowing - our very own Chiltern Edge ex pupil and Olympian Sam Townsend, along with Alex Gregory MBE who won Olympic Gold in the men's fours last year in that glorious summer of 2012.

They gave an inspirational talk about their careers in British rowing and the difficulties they overcame to achieve success in over 10 years. Sam and Alex stayed at the end of the talk, so that students could have their pictures taken with Alex's medal and were very generous with their time." ■





# Your library needs you...



**The time has come to volunteer to support Sonning Common Library. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) will withdraw some funding for the village library from April 2015, which will result in the staff budget being reduced.**

Although the post of library manager will continue to be funded and a member of staff will be on duty when the library is open, volunteers will be needed to support professional staff to maintain current service standards and opening hours.

The library is currently open to the community for 25 hours a week and exclusively to Sonning Common Primary School for 10.5 hours a week; this will not change. James Hazlewood, Community Library Coordinator for OCC, said: "To make this work we will need 28 hours a week of volunteer time. Based on the similar work we have done with other communities, we estimate that this could be covered by a pool of around 30 volunteers. This assumes that each volunteer would be able to cover a two to three hour session once a fortnight."

The Library Service has also confirmed that a full training package has been developed to prepare and support volunteers for the role.

Ros Varnes, chair of the Friends of Sonning Common Library, said: "We know how much residents cherish the village library from the strength of feeling there was when it was threatened with closure.

"Although it is difficult to accept cuts to the service, the changes ahead bring opportunities for residents to get more involved with shaping the local library service. We do hope that this community can work in partnership with library staff and OCC to ensure the library has a sustainable future."

The Friends of Sonning Common Library will host a meeting, supported by OCC, for anyone wishing to find out more about volunteering at the library.

**The meeting will take place in the library on Thursday, 20 March at 8pm.**

## Expression of interest in volunteering at Sonning Common Library...

I am interested in the following roles (please tick all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> volunteering to support staff in the library | <input type="checkbox"/> joining the Friends of Sonning Common Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overseeing the volunteer rota                | <input type="checkbox"/> supporting the library in another way         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> acting as the Volunteer Co-ordinator         |  |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to: Rosemary Dunstan, Manager, Sonning Common Library, Grove Road, Sonning Common

## Could you become a Computer Buddy?

As well as all the other volunteers we will need in the near future, we're looking for computer literate people to be 'computer buddies' - people willing to help others with improving their computer skills. Ask in the library for more information - and let us know also if you think you would like the help of a 'computer buddy'!



## Get Safe online

Excellent new advice pages for parents by visiting [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org) select 'Safeguarding Children'.

Get Safe Online has also enlisted the help of independent experts to provide free, practical advice on topical child internet safety issues, and is inviting parents to sign up to receive regular email updates.

To sign up, please visit [www.getsafeonline.org/switchedon](http://www.getsafeonline.org/switchedon)



# Local mountainboarder rides to victory...

Harry Jessop, a gardener from Sonning Common brought home 1st place in the Masters (30+ category) of the 2013 ATBA-UK Mountainboard Series.

Harry scooped first place in the Masters category after gaining the most points overall from the seven competitions.

"Despite being 33, I still feel I'm improving as a rider. After competing for many years, it is a real honour to win the Andre La Roche memorial trophy which is dedicated to a great friend and rider who sadly is no longer with us.

*This trophy represents passion and dedication to the sport and can only be won by scoring the highest points in the Masters category. I look forward to defending it next year."*

For more information about mountainboarding visit [www.mountainboarding.uk.com](http://www.mountainboarding.uk.com)

Or contact your ATBA-UK Regional Representative [southcentral@atbauk.org](mailto:southcentral@atbauk.org)



## South Chiltern Choral Society prepares for its next performance

The South Chiltern Choral Society has commenced rehearsals for its next performance. The performance will be on Saturday 5 April 2014 at 7.30pm and it will be "THE ARMED MAN: A MASS FOR PEACE" by the great modern composer, Karl Jenkins.

The event is part of the Reading Borough Council commemoration of the start of the First World War.

Please visit the South Chiltern Choral Society website [www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk) to book your tickets.

## Free dementia training for your community!

**The Dementia Friendly Communities project is offering free, bespoke dementia training to community groups and workplace groups to help Oxfordshire's communities become dementia friendly.**

All you need to do, with our help, is get an informal group of interested people together in a local venue. We can offer help with venue costs and publicity as well as varying types of training on dementia. You can even decide which training sessions you want.

### Feedback after training:

*"I'm not fazed now when I meet people with dementia"*

*"I understand dementia much better now and what we can do together to help people affected"*

**Want to know more?** Call Emily Lewis on 01865 883488 or email [emily.lewis@oxonrcc.org.uk](mailto:emily.lewis@oxonrcc.org.uk) for more information.



## Help for Mrs Tiggy Winkle?

**2013 has been a busy time for hedgehog research, particularly along the M4 corridor. Whilst we reflect on what has been achieved and look forward to what still needs to be done please spare a thought for all those hedgehogs that may be flooded with the recent rain.**

Last summer myself (Ben Williams) and Dr Phil Baker (both University of Reading), in collaboration with Dr Richard Yarnell (Nottingham Trent University) and Professor Mike Bruford (Cardiff University) began a two year research project to see if, and how much, major roads are fragmenting hedgehog populations; this work is being funded by the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species.

We asked for volunteers to send in sightings of hedgehog road kill to [hedgehogs@reading.ac.uk](mailto:hedgehogs@reading.ac.uk) so that we could go and check the location and take a sample for DNA analysis. We have managed to get 130 samples so far, a great start, but were hoping to get 1000 samples over the two year period! We are still pushing hard to get as close as possible!

I have been working at Cardiff University to try and get enough DNA from the samples to analyse and start looking to see what effect roads may be having on hedgehog populations. We hope we will be able to look at the genetic variability between populations and determine movement between them.

We still need as many people as possible to send in sightings of dead hedgehogs, this research would not be possible without the kind help of yourselves! Please do keep an eye out and send in any sightings to [hedgehogs@reading.ac.uk](mailto:hedgehogs@reading.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read and showing an interest in our research. If you have any questions please do get in contact.



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# Annual Village Quiz

(Under New Management)

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Grove Road, Sonning Common

**START 7.30pm**

Teams of up to 6 players (limited to 22 teams)  
Entry Fee: £10 per team

Any profits will go to the school PTA

Entries to Mel White c/o Sonning Common Library,  
01189 722448 or [melanie444white@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:melanie444white@hotmail.co.uk)

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## BACKSTAGE, FRONT OF HOUSE AND ACTORS NEEDED...

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Common from 1939 to the present day.

It would be great to hear from anyone who is  
Polish and was also living there.

Please contact me by email [suenickson@chilternantiques.com](mailto:suenickson@chilternantiques.com)  
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## Volunteer marshalls needed for this year's On Your Bike!

Sunday 27th April 2014

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[www.onyourbikesonningcommon.co.uk](http://www.onyourbikesonningcommon.co.uk)

## Rhymetimes

Rhymetimes for pre-school children  
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10am - 10.30am in the library

## STORYTIMES

Every Saturday at 10am

Stories aimed at 3 - 7 year olds

Younger/older children welcome if they are interested

'Special storytimes', for slightly older children

Craft activities plus colouring

LOOK out for dates

## National Libraries Day Saturday 8 February

A day to celebrate all libraries in this country  
(unfortunately a dwindling number)

Special children's storytime at 10 o'clock in the library

Book-related craft activities for under-10s

Home-made cakes and drinks will be on sale

## Knit & Natter

Would anyone be interested in  
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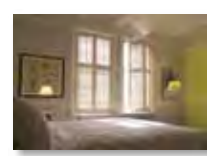
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# Sonning Common

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS... focus on finance

### From the Chairman of the Parish Council

"We are acutely aware of our responsibility to use your money carefully. Over 95% of our income arrives through the parish precept that forms a small part of your total Council Tax Demand. In the year to the end of March our precept was £82,500 or £53.75 per Band D home and it funded the four areas – cleanliness and tidiness, facilities, projects and administration - described below. We have carefully evaluated all the things that we have to do in 2014/15 to maintain and enhance village services and amenities and have set a new precept of £99,000 to make this possible. At £1.23 per week for a Band D home we hope you will see this as a fair price to pay for our services. To see the full budget behind this precept please go to our website: [www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk). A copy is available for viewing in the parish office". ■

COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS KEDGE, CHAIRMAN SCPC

### Cleanliness and tidiness

Cleanliness and tidiness is the work of street cleaning, grass verge cutting, maintaining footpaths, hedges and fences, providing litter bins and dog bins as well as looking after bus shelters and seats. We also fund the work of our unique volunteer Snow Team. Next year all this will cost £21,800. ■

### Facilities

Facilities describe what we do to provide and maintain our three children's play areas, the allotments, Widmore Pond and the CCTV around the village hall. We have set aside £15,000 for the first phase of improvements to the village hall by upgrading the thermal and acoustic insulation. We deal with the effects of the small amount of graffiti and vandalism that we experience. We support the excellent work of the Village Gardeners and also make small grants to other causes. All this will cost £29,100. ■

### Comparison

This table shows how our precept compares with that of other large villages in South Oxfordshire.

Village	Tax base (no. of properties)	Precept for 2014/15
Benson	1,691	115,972
Wheatley	1,610	100,000
Sonning Common	1,549	99,000
Cholsey	1,426	94,020
Goring	1,698	85,713

### Projects

Projects cover those areas where we make specific expenditures that benefit our residents and safeguard the future of the village. Here is where we provide a grant of £8,000 that keeps the Club SC (Youth Club) going. During the year we will be completing our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to ensure that the 138 new homes to be built between now and 2027 are of the type and in the places that best suit our community. We expect that we will soon have the £85,755 needed to build the new skatepark at Bishopswood plus a mini one for smaller children inside a play area. We also have to hold a reserve fund to deal with the unexpected. For all this we have budgeted £21,500. ■



### Administration

Administration is the cost of running the parish council and its committees as professionally as we can. Our friendly Parish Office handles hundreds of phone calls, emails, enquiries and visits from residents as well as from all the other organisations that we have to deal with. We receive and review every planning application made in the village and in some cases we have to support appeals about them. All this will cost £48,395. ■

### CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

For all matters please contact Philip Collings, Parish Clerk on 0118 972 3616 or email [clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk)

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# The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Sonning Common AN INTRODUCTION

By Ros Varnes



**Current government policy dictates that  
Sonning Common must accommodate 138  
additional homes.**

While this is good news for people wishing to move to or within  
the village, other residents will be concerned about the resulting  
squeeze on village services and amenities together with increased  
traffic volumes.

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) currently makes the  
majority of local planning decisions, in consultation with parish  
councils and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Individuals can  
influence the process by commenting on specific planning  
applications or by participating in public consultation exercises,  
when held.

However, the Localism Act of 2011 allows residents to have  
much greater control over designing planning policies for their  
communities, if they choose to establish a Neighbourhood  
Development Plan (NDP).

Such plans - which have to be fully consulted on and agreed  
by the local population - provide a framework for the residential,

employment and recreational development of an area until 2027.  
And once a plan is approved, all future planning decisions must be  
taken with reference to the NDP.

In consultation with residents, the NDP working party (NDPWP)  
intends to develop a plan which will provide a sustainable future for  
Sonning Common and be in the best interests of the village and its  
population as a whole, while meeting government requirements for  
more new homes.

A shortlist of sites has been identified for potential development,  
as detailed overleaf.

Getting to this stage has involved hundreds of hours of effort by  
the working party and the many residents who have provided  
feedback at the nine public consultation events held so far as well  
as by completing surveys and other research.

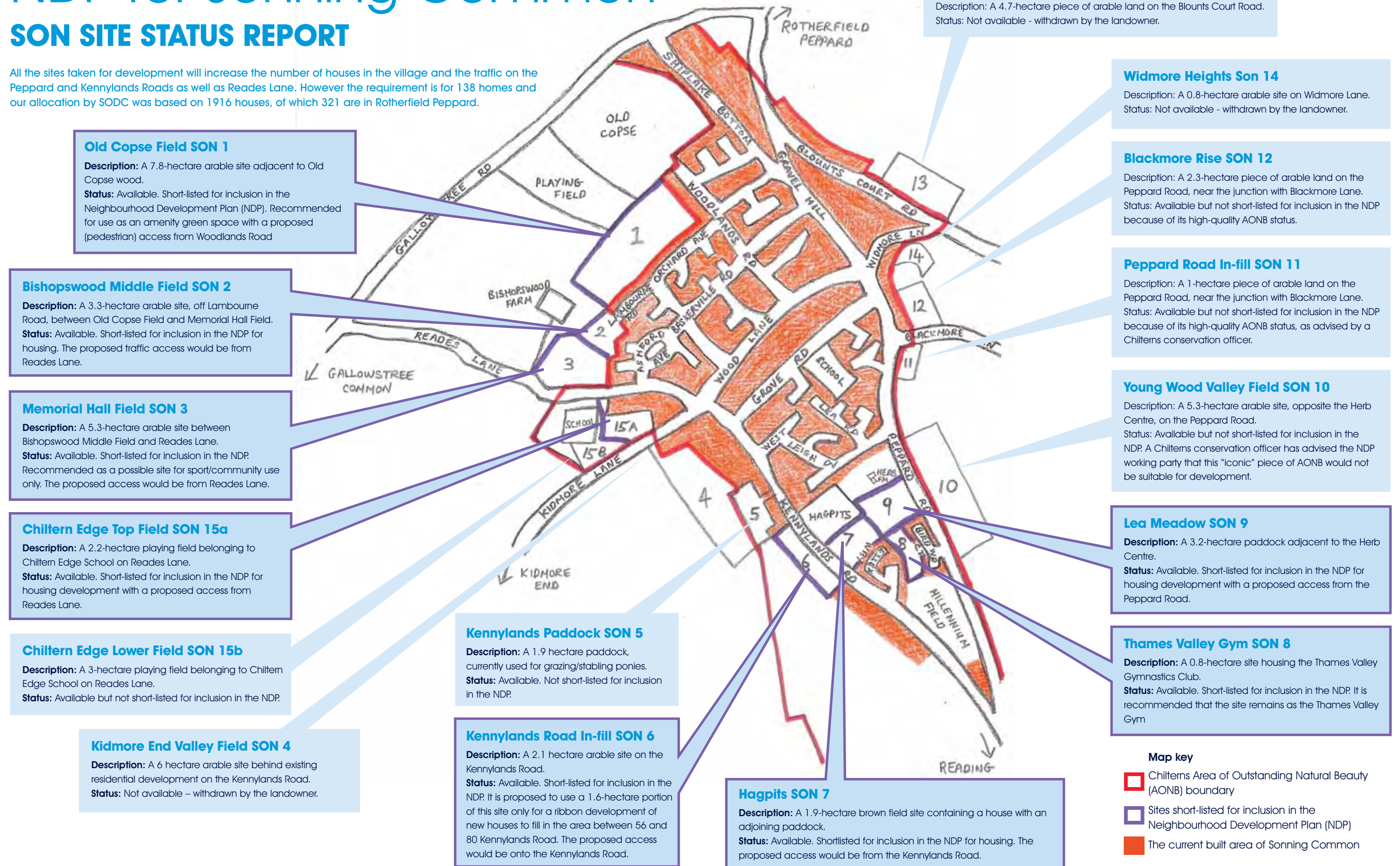
Barrie Greenwood, chair of the NDPWP, said: "For the plan to  
be credible and successful it needs the support of the village  
community. Please do participate in the process by attending  
future public consultation events and by voting in the referendum  
when the plan is eventually put to the village." ■



# NDP for Sonning Common

## SON SITE STATUS REPORT

All the sites taken for development will increase the number of houses in the village and the traffic on the Peppard and Kennylands Roads as well as Reades Lane. However the requirement is for 138 homes and our allocation by SODC was based on 1916 houses, of which 321 are in Rotherfield Peppard.





# The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Sonning Common

'Progress So Far' was the theme of another public information day held on 16 November 2013. The extensive display board exhibition in the village hall showed the phases through which the NDP Working Party (NDPWP) has progressed.

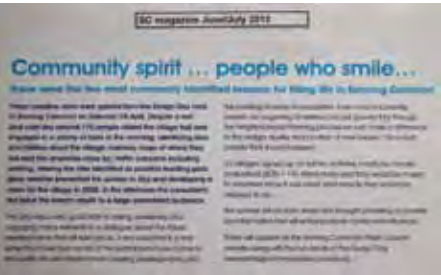
### Phase 1

Described how the NDPWP evolved and the publicity, via the Sonning Common (SC) Magazine, to recruit additional members. An outline description of 'What is an NDP', the formal letter to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), giving notification of the Parish Council's intention to complete an NDP and the draft VISION statement expressing 'What the village will look like in 2027'.

### Phase 2

170 people attended the first public meeting on 28 April 2012 (Design Day 1). The primary purpose was to make residents aware of the 14 sites identified by SODC as possible development sites and the homes to be built. The NDP's external consultant was also introduced. Two further meetings were held in June and July (Design Days 2 and 3) inviting

residents to complete Site Assessment, Village Character and Landscape Setting surveys.



### Phase 3

15 September 2012 a 'drop in' session was held to gain feedback from visitors about the regeneration of the Village Centre and to update residents about the completed surveys. (By mid-2013 over 200 surveys, many with accompanying photographs had been completed. Site surveys were collated and summarised into a template and the findings subsequently validated and presented at various public information meetings and in the SC magazine.)

### Phase 4

During the final 3 months of 2012 information gathering was the working party's key focus. The draft VISION statement was circulated to 2,000 homes with feedback requested. The ORCC Housing survey was completed by 24% of residents and a Business survey conducted. Each of these has informed the decisions

about housing mix and needs for offices. The Traffic Survey Task group was established and subsequently published its interim report in July 2013. Consultants were employed to report on the data collected via the Village Character and Landscape Setting surveys and to undertake further work on traffic concerns.

### Phase 5

The 7 (pm) and 9 February (am) 2013 public meetings were headlined 'Decision Time.' Three presentations by NDPWP members (identical scripts for each meeting) provided a detailed analysis of the 14 summaries taken from villagers' Site Assessment surveys, and introduced the criteria based 'traffic light' system. Additionally, two AUDIT sessions were held to validate the 'traffic light' conclusions, undertaken by residents the audit was managed independently by consultants. Feedback from attendees and the audit groups was examined and modifications included in the final conclusions subsequently published in the SC magazine.

### Phase 6

Throughout these phases, consultation has been taking place with Rotherfield Peppard (RPPC) and Kidmore End (KEPC) Parish Councils as SON 13 and SON 4 lie respectively within their boundaries. In Spring 2013 Chiltern Edge School Governors submitted a request to

SODC that part of the school site should be considered for housing development. This site (SONs 15a and 15b) falls within the KEPC boundary. Agreement has been reached with both parish councils to include SONs 4, 13 and 15 within the SCNDP designation area.

The NDPWP held consultations with landowners and agents and at this point SONs 4, 13, and 14 were withdrawn by their owners. During



informal talks with Chiltern Conservation board about the sites in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), it was made clear to the NDPWP that SONs 10, 11 and 12 should not be developed for the homes that SCNDP are required by law to have built. The SCNDP website was constructed to give access to the NDP information and went live in June 2013. [www.scpnc-ndp.co.uk](http://www.scpnc-ndp.co.uk)

### Phase 7

The public meeting of 19 July 2013 fed back the site survey information collected by residents on SONs 15a and 15b. An audit process for these sites was undertaken on 27 June. A comprehensive matrix was shared with attendees to this meeting, suggesting nine possible options across the remaining sites to accommodate homes, offices, amenity



green space, and a sports/community hall. The subsequent written feedback resulted in three possible options being taken forward for further consideration.

### Phase 8

The NDP consultants have completed Site Concept Statements, showing buffer screening, wildlife corridors, open space, pedestrian links, structured planting and access in respect of SONs 1, 2, 3, 6 (part), 7, 9, and 15a. All of these sites are potentially available for development. The choice of smaller sites was the view of residents in the SC Community Survey (2010), rather than large estates. Sustainability is another criteria which NDPWP has to consider and this is about maintaining shops, transport and services and the sites at the top of the village, being so close to the centre, within walking distance would meet this requirement. Although SONs 1, 2 and 3 are in the AONB, we are seeking an agreement with the landowner that we prepare for consideration, the proposal that SON 1 becomes amenity green space (to

mirror the Millennium Green), SON 2 for homes to be built and SON 3 to facilitate a sports/community hall with shared use by Chiltern Edge school.

### Phase 9

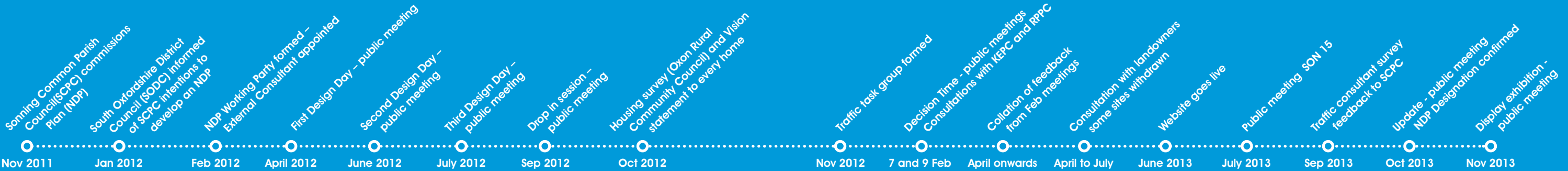
The public meeting of 11 October 2013 focussed on three important topics; Traffic & Parking, the Character of Sonning Common village and the options selected by residents for the location of future homes and associated facilities. The map shows the Built lines limit around the village.

On 25 October 2013, the SCPC was advised that SODC has formally designated the SC Neighbourhood area.



### Final phase

The write-up of the final Neighbourhood Development Plan, consultations with residents, submission to SODC and the Examiner will take 45 weeks. It is hoped that the referendum will take place in March 2015. ■





# The Fish Tale

in the last six months a new bus, a new computer and now a new office

When Ann Butler-Smith first had the idea of starting a volunteer organisation in the community back in 1978 little did she know that the Fish Volunteer Centre would expand so well until it outgrew the office which it had moved into two years later. Yes, it must have been amazing then to actually have a proper office in which to operate this new charity.

We have now been in this little office at the rear of Sonning Common Village Hall for 32 years and it is certainly time to move. The office staff, frequently work under great pressure, the phone seems to ring constantly and there are always lots of folk popping in and out.

I am sure many local residents will know the old doctor's surgery at Dr Hemphill's house. Well that is where FISH is moving to, on the corner of Wood Lane and Kennylands Road. A charity called Blindcare has occupied it for the last 18 years and at three hundred and seventy five square feet it is nearly four times the size of our old office! There are two good sized rooms and a kitchenette which are just right for locals to drop in and have a

cup of tea and a chat. We will need some volunteers to help us with that!

Mary Norris our new office manager I know has plenty of fresh ideas to implement in the coming months and we now have a computer to help us get up to date. This was generously supplied by the Lions Club of Henley complete with some software. What FISH manages to do in the community is amazing but is only possible because of the wonderful volunteers who give their time, but you know what I am going to say. Yes, we need more volunteers, car drivers (there is a mileage allowance) office staff and other helpers, mini bus drivers and home visitors. Please get in touch if you can help. There are always people out there who we have yet to reach.

What next you may ask? Well, when we have settled into the new premises and sorted out all those little problems that crop up when you move and recruited some more volunteers along the way, then we will start looking forward. For example we are often asked to run errands for the housebound. Perhaps creating a Friends of FISH Club for a small membership fee to help boost funds,

and encouraging people to leave FISH a legacy in their wills to help with the work we do. A newsletter is also on the list for the near future, maybe twice a year to keep everybody up to date with what is going on. During the last year we have asked people to donate any unwanted jewellery, silver and gold items as we have good connections in Hatton Garden. This has already raised many hundreds of pounds for our funds. We hope to expand this even more.

FISH is looking to a bright future in the coming years. ■

**FRED NICKSON Chairman FVC**  
**0118 972 4520 / 07768 918501**  
**chairman@fishvolunteercentre.co.uk**



## The new FISH office co-ordinator – SHE VOLUNTEERED WILL YOU?

"So now you have retired and moved area you are probably looking for something to do," said my friend Sheila. Well, no I wasn't really, but was curious to know what she had in mind. Her answer was FISH. I had no idea what she was talking about. She told me it was a charity based in Sonning Common, which had been going for more than 30 years, which was all about local people helping other local people. It is mostly a transportation charity, assisting people to get to medical and other appointments, which they were unable to attend without help. The office is staffed weekdays from 9.30am to 11.30am. Usually there are two volunteers on duty, who do one morning each on alternate weeks. They take the enquiries and contact the drivers. But what FISH needed now was a new volunteer co-ordinator. I spoke to the retiring co-ordinator and it didn't sound too onerous. So I thought I would give it a go.

Everyone who works for FISH is a volunteer, and what a wonderful bunch they are. Quite a few of the clients we are helping now were part of the original team, who

set up the charity. It is lovely that we can now help them. We have a fantastic group of willing drivers who can get a call any morning asking if they can take someone, somewhere. We know that everyone has a life, so there is no pressure. If they have the time we are always grateful and if they can't help on a particular occasion, we understand and will call again. So many of the drivers say that they meet wonderful people through driving for us, and each one has an interesting story to tell.

We have about 40 people registered as drivers, but just recently we have had several retire or move from the area. We are always looking to recruit new drivers. Just an hour or two occasionally can be a big help. We are a very well used service and to be able to help as many people as possible, we now need some new blood.

We have grown and expanded and as you will read in other articles regarding FISH, we are moving to bigger premises. We would also like to recruit someone with either Marketing or Fund Raising experience who could help us with our expansion.

We also have a new 16 seat bus that is out almost every day of the week, taking

people on shopping trips, or to National Trust properties, mystery tea trips, pub lunches plus many others. Again each of our 10 or so bus drivers is a volunteer. John, our Bus Manager trains each one and comes up with the monthly time table for all the trips.

I love being part of such a local charity and helping to make life easier and more enjoyable for other local people.

This is such a worthwhile charity, so if you have some spare time on your hands, do pop into the office, in the village hall for the moment, and find out what you could do to help. ■

**MARY NORRIS Office Co-ordinator**



## Have Bus – Will Travel

After seven years good service, an average of 1600 passenger journeys each year and with some 47,000 miles on the clock the committee decided it was time to seek a replacement for the now familiar yellow minibus. That total number of miles may not sound a lot for a modern engine but the FISH Bus does strenuous work with many relatively short journeys, with many starts and stops. In any event the repair bills were on the increase and to make the most of any resale value this seemed an appropriate time to seek a replacement.

The decision having been made it took seven months almost to the day to acquire an IVECO Minibus and have the base vehicle converted to the desired specifications. The new Blue Bus has now been in operation for nearly three months and has proved a success with passengers and drivers alike. With the upholstered seating, separate saloon heating, air suspension and easy access steps with hand rails all making for a much more comfortable journey experience.

With the new bus we are looking at new horizons. The regular shopping trips to Henley and Reading continue with monthly visits to

other local market and shopping venues. The programme for leisure and social trips includes monthly mystery tea tours, pub lunches and visits to National Trust houses and gardens. We are always looking to expand the range of interesting and entertaining excursions and recent trips to Bath Assembly Rooms, Kew Gardens, London Zoo and a London Christmas lights tour proved very popular.

The schedule of trips and visits is published, distributed and posted on community noticeboards some ten days before the start of each month and bookings taken by telephone or in person at the FISH Office. With

a new FISH website under development it is planned to use this as another way to view (and maybe eventually make bookings onto) the planned trips.

So who can use the bus – well the simple answer is our 'community'. Many trips, particularly the shopping runs, are arranged predominantly for those of retirement age who cannot easily access their own transport.

Others provide an opportunity for socialising in different environments or accessing places and events which can stimulate and entertain. 'Seniors' remain the primary focus of the

service but the bus is a community resource and we are looking for new ways to fully use it as such. ■

**JOHN PEARMAN Bus Manager**







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- **GP SURGERIES** – if you have persistent symptoms then your GP is the right choice
- **111** – This is the free, 24 hour a day, 365 day a year NHS advice line.
- **MINOR INJURIES UNITS (MIUS)** – these centres can often treat deep cuts, eye injuries, broken bones, sprains, minor burns and scalds. Our local one is at Townlands, Henley
- **999 ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY/EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED)** – This is **ONLY** for genuine emergencies e.g. Life threatening conditions such as severe chest pains, breathing difficulties, choking, and serious bleeding injuries.

## Christmas Day lunch THANK YOU

Jill Vallis and I would like to thank all our helpers and guests who joined us for Christmas Day Lunch in the Sonning Common Village Hall. This event which attracts 50 people is in its 5th year and we know it is looked forward to by many Sonning Common residents.

We also wish to thank Tesco, Waitrose, Robin Swift, Chiltern Edge Community Association, the Henley Lions Club and the local CCA charity shop, all of whom helped us in various ways. A very special thanks goes to Paul Bailey who with Jill Vallis's assistance hand-made all the decorations in the village hall from recycled materials and set a very high standard. Paul already has some ambitious plans up his sleeve for next year!

If you did not know about our special Christmas Day lunch and would like to come next year, please make a note in your diary and contact me nearer the time. It is open to anyone who is on their own or couples who cannot face cooking turkey for two and would like some company. Thank you ■

**CHRISSIE PHILLIPS-TILBURY**  
0118 972 1058 [phillipstilbury@gmail.com](mailto:phillipstilbury@gmail.com)

## Bumper apple harvest

We have one very large Bramley apple tree in our back garden. This last summer it has been over laden with delicious cooking apples. Coming from a generation that was taught 'Waste not, want not' I have taken a wheelbarrow of Bramleys, placing it outside the Village Hall. To date I have taken 58 wheelbarrows full to the brim with apples!! I hope you have enjoyed them? ■

**BARBARA BUTLER 50 Wood Lane**

# Tom Fort TOO FAT

The news on the bathroom scales front is grim but not yet critical. Fifteen stone twelve pounds, the machine says and – unfortunately – the machine does not lie.

A long time ago I was a fit and lean thirteen-and-a-half stone person. Later I became reconciled to fourteen stone, then – after some more time – fifteen. For a while I completely lost touch with my weight – until, two Christmases ago, I got the scales as a present. I got on the machine. I got off it and gave it a shake, checked settings, got on again. There was no mistake: sixteen stone four pounds. I felt faint, and huge.

A couple of months later, after some serious self-denial, I was fifteen four, and I kept it there or thereabouts until fairly recently when I began to notice a certain tightness around the waistband again.

Personally I blame Christmas. It's not so much the dinner itself, and the lunches and dinners that precede it and follow it. It's the accessories, the extras that constitute such an appalling temptation to someone as weak-willed as myself. As I write this, several boxes of chocolates and fudge and a bag of home-made mints have been disposed of, and significant inroads have been made into the bags of truffles and the very large amount of cheese and double cream.



However, much chocolate remains, as does at least one more box of fudge, another of smart chocolates and four unopened bags of salted nuts. Most of the Christmas cake survives, as does half a scandalously rich and seductive German marzipanstollen given to me by one of the editors of this magazine.

There is also an untouched Dickinson and Morris Melton Mowbray pork pie. I look at it from time to time, salivating furiously. I know I need to deal with it before I can move on. But what to do? I am so weak. I need help. ■

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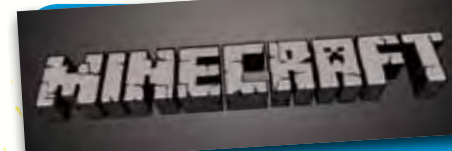
## JUST FOR KIDS

**Hi guys,**

Hi, my name's Zack. I've taken over from my sister as the new editor of this page as she has now gone to secondary school and has lots of homework! Here's a little bit about me: I'm eight years old, I live in Sonning Common, I love my two dogs and I love playing Minecraft.

I'd love to hear from you, so please email me what you like doing or any pictures. My email address is [junior\\_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:junior_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

**ZACK**



If you're under 5 or over 14, you might not know what Minecraft is, so I will tell you a bit about it. Minecraft is a computer game made of blocks. There is no aim of the game, all you have to do is build. You can build some interesting things. For instance, in my world, I've built rollercoasters, rockets, and time machines. Here's a picture of a house I've just finished building.



**MY TIP**

**HOW TO GET A COMMAND BLOCK:** A command block is a special block you can use to do things you can't do with cheats. To get a command block on a mac all you have to do is turn on cheats, type "/give (then put your user name) 137" once you have done that, press enter and a command block will fall into your inventory. Using this you can make a force field, summon all the animals in the game and make exciting combinations of them, and you can get blocks without mining them.

## SKATEBOARDING

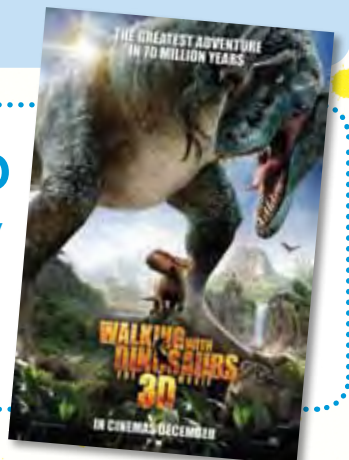


I love skateboarding, so I am very excited about the skateboarding park that is going to open in Sonning Common. My brother and I both got skateboards for Christmas, but at the moment we can only practice on the road. Where do you practice?


## FILM REVIEW

### Walking with Dinosaurs 3D


This is a brilliant film, although bits were very scary. The dinosaurs looked real and even though it's an adventure story, I learnt a bit about dinosaur names.





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## MEMORIES OF

# Meirion & Joyce Morgan

By JOHN LEWIS

*As an ex-resident of Sonning Common, Jane Arch's very sad news of the passing of Joyce and Meirion Morgan brought back many memories.*

I was brought up at 22 Pen-y-fan Road, Llanfaes, Brecon, whilst Meirion was brought up opposite at No. 19, and we joined Llanfaes Junior School together.

At 11 years of age Meirion gained a scholarship to Christ College whilst I went to the local grammar school. Meirion became an accomplished scrum half and I watched him play against Llandovery College.

Joyce lived in an 'old pickwickian' tobaccoists in the town. The windows

were filled with clay pipes and corn of the cob pipes, Mearsham pipes and umbrellas. The shelves were covered in all sorts of loose tobaccos in glass jars and tins of snuff.

After I was called up to the RAMC and Meirion to the Welsh Regiment, we didn't meet again for many years. Happily we both came to Sonning Common, Meirion as an accountant in the biscuit industry and I as a teacher in Reading.



They were a lovely, quiet couple, both very musical, as was Meirion's father who founded the Brecon Male Voice Choir and, I believe, once won the Welsh National Eisteddfod.

I thought I would share these memories with you and your readers. ■

## Church news

As ever, church services were well attended over Christmas and donations to the Children's Society were generous.

The Bishop of Dorchester has appointed the Revd Susan Cooper as House for Duty Associate Priest in the benefice. Susan and her husband Ron live in New Zealand and must first sell their house before they join us. Susan is British, her husband is a New Zealander.

Thank you to all who donated food, clothes or money to the Churches in Reading Drop in Centre (CIRDIC) enquiries@cirdic.org.uk

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

**Sunday 19 January** 6.30pm at St John's: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service

**Saturday January 25** at 7pm in St Mary's Church, Henley: Vivaldi's Gloria and our combined choir from Christ the King and St John's, Kidmore End will be singing the New Zealand carol Te harinui and Brian Knowles' We Three Kings.

**Tuesday 4 March** Shrove Tuesday

**Wednesday 5 March** Ash Wednesday

**Friday 7 March** Women's World Day of Prayer

**Sunday 30 March** Mothering Sunday

**Sunday 20 April** Easter Sunday

**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ALL OUR CHURCHES!**

### THE WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

**Friday 7 March 2014**

Groups of Christian churches get together each year throughout the world for a one hour service prepared by women of different

countries. Participating churches are the Stoke Row Chapel, Springwater Congregation Church, Christ the King, St John the Baptist and All Saints' CE Churches and St Michael's Catholic Church.

Springwater Congregation Church  
Blounts Court Road

**1pm** soup, roll, tea and coffee

**2pm-3pm** Service

Theme 'Streams in the Desert' by Christian women of Egypt

Some 35 hours later the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries, with 6,000 services held in the British Isles.

Although organised by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, demonstrating our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend.

Do come along and join us.

Shirley Rixon, Secretary, Peppard and District WWDP Committee ■

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# February 2014

MONDAY 3	Rhymetimes for pre-school children - Sonning Common Library	10am - 10.30am
WEDNESDAY 5	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all. Raising funds for local community projects - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
FRIDAY 7	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.30am
FRIDAY 7	Scrabble club. All abilities welcome - Sonning Common Library	10am
SATURDAY 8	National Libraries Day - Sonning Common Library	10am
TUESDAY 11	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Introduction to Bonsai" by Keith Winter - Peppard War Memorial Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 14	Notts group - Village Hall	9.30am - 12noon
MONDAY 17	Rhymetimes for pre-school children - Sonning Common Library	10am - 10.30am
MONDAY 17	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 20	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 20	Sonning Common Women's Institute - "Bletchley Park - a minor cog in a major wheel" a talk by Betty Webb. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 21	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.30am
THURSDAY 27	FISH - Henley Farmers' Market	
FRIDAY 28	Notts group - Village Hall	9.30am - 12noon

# March 2014

MONDAY 3	Rhymetimes for pre-school children - Sonning Common Library	10am - 10.30am
MONDAY 3	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all. Raising funds for local community projects - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
WEDNESDAY 5	Chiltern Players play reading. Buy a drink and join in - Reformation pub	8pm
FRIDAY 7	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 7	Scrabble club. All abilities welcome - Sonning Common Library	10am
FRIDAY 7	Women's World Day of Prayer service. Soup, a roll and tea & coffee will be served. All welcome - Springwater Congregational Church, Blounts Court Rd	1pm
TUESDAY 11	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Wildlife & Wildlife Gardening" by Stuart Mabutt - Peppard War Memorial Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 14	Notts group - Village Hall	9.30am - 12noon
MONDAY 17	Rhymetimes for pre-school children - Sonning Common Library	10am - 10.30am
MONDAY 17	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 20	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 20	Sonning Common Women's Institute - AGM & Quiz. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 21	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 21	Annual Village Quiz - Sonning Common Primary School	7.30pm
THURSDAY 27	FISH - Henley Farmers' Market	
FRIDAY 28	Notts group - Village Hall	9.30am - 12noon

The FISH Bus programme for February is currently available and the March programme will be published on 20 February 2014. For more information and to book call 0118 972 3986. FISH runs regular shopping trips to Tesco in Henley and Henley and Reading town centres. Also monthly trips to a local Garden Centre and a Mystery Tea Tour. For more information and to book call 0118 972 3986. ■

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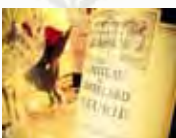
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